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Message Text

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65
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 MC-02 SY-05

SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03 TRSE-00 IO-13 EUR-12 EA-07

OMB-01 /091 W
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R 101020Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6136

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0805

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, XX, MP
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED POINTS RAISED PARA 2 REFTEL WITH "HARRY" FULENA, COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND DIRECTOR OF MAURITIAN SPECIAL BRANCH (MAURITIAN POLICE RESPONSIBLE FOR AIRPORT SECURITY). FULENA SAID THATLACK OF ADEQUATE SECURITY AT PLAISANCE AIRPORT IS "WORRISOME", BUT BECAUSE OF POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL REASONS HE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO INSTITUTE MEASURES OR BUY EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD IMPORVE AIRPORT SECURITY. FULENA RULED OUT ON POLITICAL GROUNDS A TRAINING VISIT TO MAURITIUS BY FAA SPECIALISTS, BUT POST BELIEVES THAT GOM WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO OFFER OF TRAINING AT FAA SECURITY PROGRAM IN THE U.S. OR OFFER OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

2. EMBOFF ALSO MET WITH UDAI FULENA, SON OF THE COMMISSIONER AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION, WHO IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR PLAISANCE AIRPORT SECURITY. FULENA IS RECENTLY RETIRED RAF OFFICER WHO HAS GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF AIRPORT SECURITY NEEDS AND GAPS. HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS, SOME IN RESPONSE QUESTIONS BY EMBOFF:
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A. MAURITIAN POLICE FURNISH 30 MEN ON ROTATING BASIS TO PROVIDE TERMINAL SECURITY AND STATIC SURVEILLANCE OF AIRCRAFT. THEY ARE AUGMENTED BY AIRPORT CIVILIAN SECURITY GUARDS, THUS PROVIDING TOTAL OF ABOUT 12 SECURITY MEN PER SHIFT. ASSIGNED SECURITY GUARDS HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE TRAINING IN AIRPORT SECURITY PROCEDURES, AND WOULD BE UNABLE TO REACT WITH ANY SKILL OR PRECISION TO TERRORIST ATTACK;

B. SHORTLY AFTER RETURNING FROM ENGLAND AND ASSUMING DUTIES, HE DID SURVEY WHICH RESULTED IN REQUEST TO AIRPORT AUTHORITY TO PURCHASE X-RAY MACHINE FOR LUGGAGE AND WALK-THROUGH METAL DETECTORS. AIRPORT OPERATIONS FUNDED DIRECTLY FROM PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, AND RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST HAS BEEN NEGATIVE ON COST GROUNDS (X-RAY MACHINE ALONE COSTS 50,000 US DOLLARS);

C. SECURITY IN TERMINAL AND IN TRANSIT LOUNGES IS UNSATIS-FACTORY. MAJOR PROBLEM IS READY ACCESS TO VIP LOUNGE AND ITS USE BY MAJORITY OF PASSENGERS. LUGGAGE OF VIP PASSENGERS NOT SUBJECT TO PHYSICAL SEARCH;

D. CONTRARY TO ICAO REQUIREMENTS, CONTROL TOWER HAS NO RADAR;

E. AIR TRAFFIC VARIES ACCORDING TO SEASONAL TOURIST TRAFFIC, BUT THERE ARE AVERAGE OF 50 FLIGHTS WEEKLY BY 12 INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS;

F. ANY TERRORIST ACT WOULD MORE LIKELY STEM FROM EXTERNAL RATHER THAN INTERNAL GROUPS. MOST LIKELY TARGETS WOULD BE EUROPEAN OR SOUTH AFRICAN PASSENGERS OR PLANES.

3. POST'S IMPRESSION OF AIRPORT SECURITY IS THAT IT IS GENERALLY POOR AND THA SECURITY FORCES WOULD HAVE LITTLE CHANCE OF DETECTING OR THWARTING A TERRORIST ATTACK FROM EXPERIENCE OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL, IT IS RELATIVELY EASY FOR UNSCREENED PASSENGERS TO ENTER AND REMAIN IN TRANSIT LOUNGES.

4. PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN CONFIDENTIAL

DIFFERENT PART OF THE ISLAND, AND THUS GOM WOULD UNLIKELY BE RESPONSIVE TO PURCHASE OR INSTALLATION OF ANY TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT WHICH DIFFICULT TO MOVE LATER ON. POST BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT GOM WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR AND BENEFIT FROM ATTENDANCE OF GOM AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICIAL (PROBABLY UDAI FULENA) AT FAA SECURITY COURSE. THIS OFFICIAL COULD RETURN WITH CREDENTIALS TO UPGRADE SECURITY AT PLAISANCE AIRPORT AND LATER PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND INPUT INTO PHYSICAL SECURITY

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ARRANGEMENTS AT NEW AIRPORT.
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